

This Week in Washington



Stimulus Payments Left Unclaimed

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has identified more than 5 million Americans – mostly low-income seniors, disabled veterans and others with disabilities – who have not yet claimed their economic stimulus checks. These unclaimed payments total more than \$33 million.

In fact, more than 112,000 Alabamians have yet to file a 2007 tax return resulting in more than \$33 million in unclaimed economic stimulus payments.

Mobile is among the top 100 cities nationwide with 6,725 unclaimed payments. Additionally, Mobile and Baldwin Counties are among the top 200 counties nationwide with unclaimed payments. The
There are 10,103 unclaimed payments in Mobile County worth more than \$3 million, and more than \$1 million remains unclaimed in Baldwin County.

As you know, Congress passed an economic stimulus package earlier this year in response to the national economic downturn. Qualifying taxpayers have been eligible to receive up to \$600 for individuals or up to \$1,200 for married couples.

According to the IRS, the actual amount depends on the information contained on your tax return. Eligible individuals will receive between \$300 and \$600. Couples who are eligible and file a joint return will receive a total of between \$600 and \$1,200. Those with children will get an additional \$300 for each qualifying child.

The payments are automatically processed when you file your annual tax form. However, many of the people who have not yet claimed their payments are folks who are not required to file a tax return because their income is too low or not taxable.

You may still be eligible for the stimulus check if you receive at least \$3,000 in qualifying income of Social Security, Veterans Affairs or Railroad Retirement benefits. You must have a Social Security number and not be claimed as a dependent on someone else's tax return.

Those eligible to receive an economic stimulus payment have until October 15 to file their tax return in order to receive their payment this year.

The IRS is currently sending a second notice to those who may be eligible for the payment but have not yet sent in the necessary paperwork needed to receive their check.

The notice from the IRS will include the Form 1040A as well as instructions on completing the form.

If you have not yet received your stimulus payment and believe you are eligible or if you need assistance in completing your form, visit www.irs.gov or call 800-829-1040.

The local IRS office in Mobile can also provide you with assistance. The phone number is 340-1794 and the address is 1110 Montlimar Drive.

The hours are Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. and no appointment is necessary.

According to the IRS, receiving your stimulus payment should have no impact on other federal benefits you may currently receive. The stimulus payment is not taxable, and filing a tax return in order to receive a stimulus payment does not mean you will be required to start filing tax returns again.

If you miss the October 15 deadline and do not file a tax return to obtain your stimulus payment, you may still receive your payment by filing a 2008 tax return next spring. However, your stimulus payment will then be based on your 2008 qualifying income.

August Town Hall Meetings

As a reminder, I have scheduled a series of town hall meetings for next week. I hope each of you will take the opportunity to find the meeting closest to your home and come out to visit with my staff and me.

Monday, August 11

8:00 - 9:00 a.m. – Bay Minette

City Hall

10:00 - 11:00 a.m. – Atmore

Municipal Auditorium

1:00 - 2:00 p.m. – Brewton

City Hall

3:00 - 4:00 p.m. – Monroeville

City Hall

Tuesday, August 12

9:30 – 10:30 a.m. – Grand Bay

Senior Center

1:30 – 2:30 p.m. – Creola

City Hall

3:30 – 4:30 p.m. – Chatom

Town Hall

5:00 – 6:00 p.m. – Jackson*

City Hall

**Our newsletter incorrectly listed this time as 5:30-6:30 p.m., but due to council business, it will begin at 5:00 p.m.*

Wednesday, August 13

2:00 – 3:00 p.m. – Semmes

Semmes Community Center

Thursday, August 14

8:30 – 9:30 a.m. – Fairhope

City Hall

10:00 – 11:00 a.m. – Foley

City Hall

3:00 – 4:00 p.m. – Lillian

Community Center

My staff and I work for you. If we can ever be of service, do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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For release the week of Monday, August 04, 2008. For more information please contact Mike Lewis at (202)225-4931.